

HUNGARY TIGHTENS SCREWS ON WORKERS

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A current joke popular in the European satellites points out that they should be grateful for the USSR-- it forms a buffer state against the Communist Chinese and their newly-established commune system. Even this doubtful advantage of membership in the Communist "camp," however, is fast fading or non-existent, according to reports of recent developments in the satellites. Communes have already begun in Bulgaria. Intensified drives to force the peasant into farm collectives, the first step along the way to complete communal living, are reported in Czechoslovakia and more recently in Hungary.

The communes, a device for wringing out of the worker the highest production at the lowest return, were described by Sripati Chandrasekhar, a prominent Indian social scientist who recently traveled extensively in China, as a system for controlling every aspect of human life from morning to night and from birth to death. Chandrasekhar's conclusion after inspecting the commune regarded as a showpiece and a pattern for other similar organizations was that its human inhabitants were reduced to the level of inmates in a zoo. Chandrasekhar added that the zoo seemed somewhat preferable in that the animals were not kept at backbreaking labor and did not have to listen to the ever-present radio.

Repellant as the commune system is, Communist bosses in the satellites have been quick to realize that it is responsible for the Chinese "big leap forward" in control of the worker as well as in production. It is understandable that they seek to realize some of these gains by adopting similar systems in their own countries. The imposition of the commune system as it prevails in China would be impossible now in the European satellites where even 14 years of Communist domination have not erased the traditions of individualism and the dignity of man. But a trend toward more stringent control of workers and the means of production, the first step in the direction of the commune, is clearly visible.

The Hungarian Government decided last December to intensify the drive to increase collective farms at the expense of the independent farmers. Although when this policy was announced it was stated that collective membership would be completely voluntary, it now appears that coercive measures are being employed to force recalcitrant peasants into collectives. In some areas the police have acted against the independent farmers, arresting and interrogating them. In addition, security police have been sent from the cities to increase rural police capacities. Measures to make the collectives more "attractive," such as raising taxes for the independent farmer, subsidizing the collective and giving certain marketing benefits to collective products have also been undertaken, although to date without success.

The effort to control more closely the life of every citizen is apparent in fields other than agriculture. Hungarian Chief Prosecutor Geza Szenasi recently told parliament that his chief responsibility is to guard against political crimes. "Although last year" he stated, "fewer persons had to be held responsible for political crimes, we did not fail to note the hostile declarations made by some since the defeat of the counter-revolution. To reveal such deeds and to punish them is still the main task of our criminal investigation efforts. We will punish the gang leaders, the ideological leaders and the terrorists with the full severity of the law."

What the prosecutor meant by political crimes may be seen in the case of a Hungarian who was sentenced recently to imprisonment for two years and nine months. His crime consisted of writing a letter to a friend in Austria which was returned as "unknown" and opened by the Hungarian post office. The letter said in part, "Now people are no longer beaten to death in the streets.... Invisible intimidation is being used. The rise in wages was carried out with such strategem that everybody gets less than before." A second letter, written but not sent to his brother in Canada, was found in his briefcase. It was quoted as saying, "Strikers if caught are executed without a trial. At present there are more people interned or deported than ever before."

Efforts to enforce the Party line more strictly in cultural and intellectual affairs are also evident. The Hungarian Communist Party's ideological journal Partelet

recently attacked Gyorgy Lukacs, Socialist writer and philosopher who had been a member of Imre Nagy's cabinet during the 1956 uprising, as being unable to master the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. Since Lukacs has been living quietly in retirement, this is intended to be a warning to other intellectuals who may be tempted to stray from strict adherence to the line.

Partelet went on to describe the ultimate goal of Communism in these chilling terms: "The underlying condition for the final victory...is the banishment of the remnants of bourgeois ideology--individualism, nationalism, religious beliefs--from human consciousness." One need add only that when the individual thus conditioned can be forced to live in a commune and work 16 hours a day for subsistence wages, the dream of the Communist bosses will be realized.